

# NUER BEAST TALES.

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## THE JACKAL AND THE HYENA.

### 1.

Walking along the road one day Rill the Jackal was overtaken by Yak the Hyena and after passing the time of day they sat down for a chat. "Where are you going to?" asked Yak, "I was just on my way to visit some relations who can be depended on to supply a good hot brew of porridge which I am badly in need of having eaten nothing for two days," replied Rill. Yak was also famishing as, owing to a bad foot, he had been unable to procure meat for himself so asked Rill if he might accompany him.

Setting off together they walked for many miles until Yak, whose bad foot was painning him, said he could go no further. Rill, therefore, volunteered to carry him as the distance to go was not far but said that Yak must allow himself to be bound to a log of wood so that he could be carried with ease. Arriving at the house they were greeted by the inmates who had not seen Rill for some time but were astonished to see him carrying his friend in such a peculiar way.

Rill told them that he had discovered Yak on the road in a dying condition on account of hunger and asked that a bowl of porridge might be prepared without delay. All this time Yak was lying on the ground still tied to the log of wood from which Rill refused to release him until he had eaten his fill.

Two plates of porridge were eventually produced and having released one of Yak's arms they began their meal. However, Yak who was not used to using a spoon, managed to swallow it by mistake and when their hosts came to remove the empty dishes and found that one spoon was missing they were very annoyed and accused Rill of stealing it. Rill, however, told them what had happened and advised them to punish Yak for his carelessness. Whereupon Yak was soundly beaten and in his struggles to release himself from his bonds he sicked up the spoon and so was once again at peace with the occupants of the house. Yak was then released and after a short rest proceeded on his way with Rill.

### 2.

After going a little way Yak noticed some bees swarming in a tree and asked Rill what was the cause of the disturbance. Rill explained that they

were busy making a very excellent form of food called honey and held forth lengthily on the beneficial results that ensued after eating it. This so impressed Yak that he determined to sample the delicacy and asked how it could be obtained. This was just what Rill wanted and said that it was quite easily procured so long as Yak would comply implicitly with his instructions. Having promised to do this they both cautiously ascended the tree until they were just underneath the hive. Then tying Yak firmly to the trunk by a stout rope, leaving only one arm free from the elbow, Rill placed a long stick in his hand. With this stick Yak was to strike the hive violently in order to frighten off the bees but must be careful not to do so until Rill had given him warning. Rill then hastily jumped to the ground and ran home as fast as his legs could carry him shouting to Yak as he went to hit the hive as hard as he could. Little expecting what would happen Yak smote with all his might and was immediately set upon by the infuriated animals who stung him until he became quite unconscious. Remaining in this position for several days he got so thin that he eventually slipped through his bonds to the ground and slowly made his way home swearing vengeance on his newly acquired acquaintance.

## 3.

Not long afterwards Rill was returning from the River carrying with him a large piece of hippo meat which he had been given by some people he had by chance met. Turning a corner he suddenly came face to face with Yak who at once flew into a rage and threatened to eat Rill for the trick he had played him. Rill, however, was little perturbed and explained that if he had struck the hive properly all would have been well. Seeing that he was about to be eaten Rill produced the hippo meat and handing it over to Yak suggested he should sample it before carrying his threat into execution. A fire was quickly made and the meat cooked and Yak was so taken with it that he promised to forgive Rill if he would tell him how such excellent meat could be procured.

Rill said he had been to the River that morning and finding a young hippo on the bank had tied a rope round his waist and making a noose at the other end had passed it quietly over the head of the hippo whilst he was asleep and then had speared it to death.

Yak then asked Rill to accompany him when they together could have a good feed but Rill said his wife was about to give birth to a child and therefore begged to be excused though he had no objection to lending his rope.

Arriving at the River Yak had no difficulty in finding a hippo and, carrying out the instructions he had been given, speared the hippo in the buttocks and was immediately pulled into the River and very nearly drowned, only escaping in the nick of time.

4.

When they next met Rill was about to cook Looth the fish (Protopterus) which he had caught and had indeed already got on the embers when Yak appeared.

"I let you off last time through the goodness of my heart," said Yak, "but never again and this time you surely shall die." However, at that moment the delightful smell of the roasting fish reached his nostrils and instead of taking action sat down beside Rill to partake of the feast. "Why do you not kill me," said Rill, "After I've tasted some of that fish," replied Yak, licking his lips in anticipation. No word passed between them until Yak had devoured the whole fish himself and then turning to Rill asked how that was procured. "Saved again" thought Rill to himself and then addressing the hyena continued: "That's a very easy matter. Go to the River and on the bank look out for a small mound of newly turned earth and when you find this scrape with your fingers to the depth of a few inches when you will find the fish with its mouth open looking up at you. All you have then to do is to lower a certain part of your anatomy into the hole thus made when the fish will catch hold of it and can be lifted out."

They once again parted Yak for the River and Rill in the opposite direction, having asked to be excused on the pretext of cleaning his crops. Doing as he had been bidden, the hyena was badly bitten on a very tender part of his body and ran away howling with pain.

5.

No words were wasted at their next meeting but Rill was immediately attacked, knocked down, and pulled over the rough ground by the infuriated Yak. Rill stuck it for a bit but the pain was getting so intense that something really had to be done if he was to survive such terrible treatment. In a very feeble voice Rill murmured, "I'm nearly dead now so please finish me off quickly by pulling me over the sandy soil." This the hyena did and so saved Rill's life for the sand scratching his back soothed him immensely and he dosed off to sleep. Waking up suddenly he saw Yak perspiring profusely and at the same time drew his attention to some people who were passing with a herd of goats a little way off. Noticing that the hold on his legs had slackened somewhat Rill jerked them free and grabbing Yak by the ankles soon had him on his back and raced backwards and forwards over the rough ground paying no attention to the pleadings of his enemy. This went on until Yak became unconscious and seeing this Rill left him on the ground and departed for Yak's house.

On reaching there he told Yak's wife that her husband had had a seizure and was on the point of death and suggested that she should go and bring him home but before doing so to kill a bull and get her sister to prepare plenty of

good food for the invalid. In due course, Yak, who was still unconscious, was carried in by his wife and, acting on Rill's advice, was shut up in a house alone with Rill who assured the woman that he would tend him properly.

After a bit Yak came to and found Rill sitting in the middle of the floor surrounded with pots of food which he was devouring. Feeling hungry Yak asked for something to eat but Rill refused saying that it was not good for him in his critical state. After repeated entreaties which met with no response Yak called out to his wife who came running to the door to know what was wrong. Rill, however, assured her that all was well and as night was coming on warned her to go and sleep. On the following day the same thing happened the woman being informed that her husband was calling out as his wounds were being washed. On the fourth day the hyena died of hunger and Rill having by that time filled himself with good food crept out during the night and decamped.

### The Jackal and the Hawk.

#### 1.

Rill was sitting underneath a tree by the River one day fingering a couple of fish which he had caught and thinking what a good feed he was about to have when from above he heard, "Wish you'd give a pal a bit of that fish of yours, Rill." Looking up to see who the unwelcomed visitor was he spotted Ijong the hawk. "Alright," said Rill, "but you'll have to go and get something to light a fire with," and pointing to a shiny object in the far distance instructed Ijong to go and get it. When alone Rill saw Quet the tortoise going off to the River to drink and calling him over stamped on his back the shock of which made Quet pass nature and with this he proceeded to make a fire while Quet looked on in anticipation of a feed. Rill, however, took Quet, popped him top of the fire, cooked and ate him. In the meantime he roasted the fish, the best parts of which he devoured leaving the bones and bad parts for Ijong when he should return.

Ijong then arrived with the news that the sparkling thing that Rill had seen in the distance was only the tooth of a lion with the rays of the sun shining on it. Ijong, however, had asked the lion for a loan of his tooth to make fire with but had met with no success the lion stating that he knew Rill of old as a thief and a liar and would do nothing to help him. "Its all the same," said Rill, "I managed to make a fire and here's the fish, you eat it for I'm not hungry to-day." Ijong therefore devoured the leavings unconscious of what had actually happened.

#### 2.

They then set out to visit a girl who Rill had fallen in love with and wished to marry. On the way Ijong was flying on in front when Rill found an exceptionally big shell which is used by everyone as a spoon. He said nothing

but put it in the bag he was carrying. Further on he found four more small spoons and calling to Ijong gave him two and took two himself adding that they would probably be wanted when they reached his fiancée's house. After a bit they started discussing marriage and Rill brought up the subject of spoons saying that he thought perhaps they had better discard those that they had picked up as it might be considered offensive if guests brought their own. Rill knew that a young man seeking the hand of a maiden must always bring with him his spoon but Ijong was ignorant of the fact. Both of them therefore threw away their two spoons but Rill retained the large one he had previously acquired unknown to Ijong. On arrival at the house Rill drew his future father-in-law to one side and said, "Look here this fellow Ijong who is a friend of mine cannot eat anything but the very hottest porridge so just see to it that he gets what he wants."

When the food arrived a big bowl of steaming potage was put in front of each and Ijong who was very hungry tried to pick it up in his fingers, but it burnt him so badly that he turned to Rill who he saw had already begun his with a spoon. "Where did you get that spoon from Rill? My food's so hot I can't touch it." "Never mind about my spoon Ijong, go off and find one for yourself," said Rill, and Ijong departed. With his big spoon Rill soon finished his own as well as Ijong's share leaving only a small portion. He then filled Ijong's bowl with grit and sand which he covered with the little porridge that he had left over. "This is very gritty food," remarked Ijong, when he got back and commenced his meal. "Gritty or not you'll have to eat it as our host has provided it," said Rill, so Ijong finished it with much difficulty.

In the evening Ijong, Rill and the girl all went to sleep in the same hut and during the night Rill complained of a pain in his stomach and went outside warning them not to be alarmed if he did not return as the evening air was better for him. Once outside he crept quietly to the cattle house and took a goat, killed it and hid the skin and intestines on the side of the road leading to his own house. Returning he cooked the meat, ate it and collecting the blood sprinkled it over Ijong as he lay asleep. Some fat too he carefully smeared over Ijong's beak and then went and washed himself in the River after which he returned to the house and laid down to sleep.

In the morning he was woken up by his prospective father-in-law saying that one of his goats had disappeared and Rill agreed that a search must immediately be made. On going outside the blood and fat were noticed on Ijong, and at Rill's instigation he was given a sound hiding and nearly killed. Rill then went home picking up on the way the goat skin and entrails which he had hidden during the night.

### 3.

Ijong nevertheless got news of this and going to Rill's house said that they

must go before God and have the case seen. "What nonsense," said Rill, "how can I reach Heaven without wings." "That's all arranged," replied Ijong, "You take one of my wings and my cousin Ket the shork will lend you one of his so that you'll reach there alright."

Accompanied by Ket they then flew off to Heaven, where God heard their case and let Rill off with a caution. This, however, did not please Ijong who took back the wings from Rill and flew back to earth again.

Finding himself in a bit of a fix Rill went to God and asked him for assistance but God replied that it was nothing to do with him how he got back to earth but gave him a little grain to help him on his journey. Rill took the grain but remained standing at a loss to know what to do and this so annoyed God that he gave Rill a push and sent him spinning down to earth again. Rill was afraid of his life that he would fall on some thing hard and be killed so prayed to God to be permitted to fall into a pool of water. Just as he'd finished his prayer however he landed with a terrible thump on some hard ground so that all the grain that God had given him was spilt. The fall rendered Rill unconscious and the ants came and stole all his grain. On the next day Rill, feeling very sore, regained consciousness and asked the ants to return what they had taken, which they did. He then slowly made his way to his mother's house where the old woman met him and was horrified to see him in such a battered state. "God has just thrown me out of Heaven and I am nearly dead. Go into the bean patch and dig my grave. Kill a bull and put the meat with plenty of water, cooking pots and fire wood as well and when you have done so give me warning and I will come. I will lie down in my grave and you will cover it over with a light layer of sticks and wet clay only be careful not to allow any earth fall on top of me. If you hear any noises in the hole fear not for you will know that it is the flesh falling off my bones." When the grave was ready Rill got into it and at the end of three days having finished all the meat he came out again and appeared before his mother saying that he was cured.

#### 4.

Smarting under the treatment he had received on account of Ijong Rill was only too glad to take the opportunity of once more joining up with his rival in the hopes of getting his own back. Thus they again set out for Heaven where Ijong was anxious to marry one of the girls. This trip too gave Rill the opportunity of getting square with God so the first thing he did on arrival there was to steal one of God's goats, killed it and, as he had done before, smeared the fat over Ijong's mouth. When God discovered the loss he was very angry and proceeded to investigate matters. Rill again accused Ijong who, however, was not to be caught at the same trick a second time and demanded that some form of oath should be taken to distinguish the evil doer.

God then made a small trench and said that anyone who could jump over it was not guilty but that if he fell in he was guilty and should die. Ijong was quite prepared for this but it greatly frightened Rill who said he was not feeling well and that if he fell in it would be on account of his lack of strength and not because he was in any way guilty. God therefore found that Rill was the offender but again let him off ordering that he and Ijong should go home by different routes.

On the way, however, they met, and Rill suggested a duel with bow and arrow. This Ijong accepted and Rill who was the first to shoot missed but Ijong's dart caught Rill in the shoulder and hurt so much that he gave in.

They then shook hands and started off again as friends and on the way home they passed a dom palm with ripe fruit on it. This, however, belonged to a man who lived in a house at the foot of the tree and the problem was to remove the fruit without disturbing the owner. Rill volunteered to go up the tree and throw down the fruit if Ijong would catch it before it reached the ground. This was done and as Ijong was bending down to place one of the fruit carefully on the ground Rill landed another bit down bang on top of Ijong's head which killed him at once.

Thus ended the friction between the jackal and the hawk and is the cause of the hawk's curious shaped neck to-day.

### **The Jackal and the Turtle.**

One day when Rill was very hungry he met Quoing the turtle and suggested that they should go to the cattle marah to get some milk. On reaching there Rill volunteered to take the cattle out to graze and during the day suddenly appeared back driving in front of him a black cow called Ashol which was the property of Quoing. "Come quick," said Rill, "and spear this buffalo which is attacking me," whereupon Quoing sallied forth spear in hand and killed his own cow for his eyesight was very bad. "What have you done," said Rill, "you've killed your own cow." "Well, you told me it was a buffalo," answered Quoing with indignation. "I did nothing of the sort, I told you to go and get the cattle rope in order to tie it up." Rill then took a water pot and, boring some holes in the bottom of it, ordered Quoing to go and get some sweet water from a far away pool. While he was thus employed Rill skinned the cow and after hiding the meat in the grass buried the horns in the ground leaving only the tips sticking out. After a lengthy absence Quoing returned complaining that he had made several trips to the water but the pot seemed to be a bad one as it always leaked out. "Never mind about the pot," said Rill who was now holding on to the top of the horns with apparent difficulty. "My back is nearly broken and if you don't come and help me quickly the cow will disappear altogether and we will lose all the meat." When Quoing caught

hold of the horns they came away in his hands. "I told you so!, now we've lost the cow altogether through you being so slow in getting the water," flashed Rill.

The next thing was to get rid of Quoing so that Rill could get rid of the meat to his house unobserved. Giving one horn to Quoing he told him to give it to his wife with instructions to boil it continuously in a pot of water when the pot would be found on the second day to be full of meat. If this did not come to pass it was a sure proof that the wife was a bad one and should be killed.

Quoing then departed and proceeded to make his wife boil the horn whilst Rill collected his meat and went home filling all his pots with what he could not eat himself. At the end of the second day Rill visited Quoing and enquired about the meat. Quoing admitted failure whilst Rill boasted of the success he had had and urged Quoing to kill his wife. This Quoing did and Rill the returned home.

When Quoing's mother-in-law heard the news she was very wrath and explained Rill's deception. Quoing thought for a long time of how to repay such a dastardly act. Knowing Rill's weakness for the gentler sex he wandered along until he reached a path leading to Rill's house. Here he sat down and proceeded to turn himself into a portion of a woman. It was not long before Rill passed by and seeing the object on the ground placed it on the end of his spear and walked home. On arrival there he called together his wife, mother, sister and cousin and asked them if they had dropped anything on the path. However, after due inspection nothing was found to be missing and Rill produced his find amidst the rejoicings of his family and hung it up on the roof of his house. He then left with his relations to spear fish in the neighbouring pool. On his return he found a most beautiful girl in place of the object he had picked up on the path and hastened off to make known the good tidings. That night was spent in dancing and general hilarity and on the following morning his newly-acquired wife ordered him to go to the River to catch fish. This he did, but she was nowhere to be found on his return and exhaustive enquiries did not help to solve the matter.

Being hungry he turned to the pots which held the meat of the black cow and to his astonishment found them all empty bar the last which still had a little fat in it. When licking round the edge of the pot his tongue was suddenly seized by some unseen object which turned out to be Quoing who had turned himself into a turtle once again having got his revenge. Rill implored him to let go of his tongue but this Quoing would not do until Rill had taken him down to the River and left him there.

So great a lesson did Rill suffer at the hands of Quoing that he never attempted to molest him again.